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REVIEWS

The Thurstone Vocational Guidance Tests: Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry

The Thurstone Vocational Guidance Tests constitute a series of five tests, one for each of the following subjects: Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Physics and Technical information. These five tests are designed to be used together to test high school seniors and college freshmen to determine their probable success in an engineering college.

A committee appointed in accordance with a resolution adopted by the society at its Baltimore meeting in 1918, proposed a co-operative research of the diagnostic value of various forms of entrance tests. For this purpose Dr. L. L. Thurstone, chairman of the committee, compiled six tests—the present series of five vocational guidance tests and an intelligence test. These six tests were given to about 8,000 freshmen engineering students in forty-three engineering colleges shortly after their admission. Records of the tests were filed and later compared with the students' scholarship performance. A comparison made by the committee between these test records and scholarship performance shows that the tests have a distinct predictive value.

The tests are the outgrowth of the efforts of the society for the Promotion of Engineering Education to obtain a comparison of students' scholarship in engineering courses with their ratings obtained on psychological, objective, trade, or similar tests given at their admission to college.

The items in each of the tests are all selected as having a direct appeal to students with engineering interests. The items are so constructed that their solution calls for a minimum of computation and a maximum of reasoning, which is the important factor in success in engineering and gives the best indication of engineering interest as distinct from interest in figures only.

The Arithmetic Test consists entirely of problems. The Algebra Test contains, in addition to problems, exercises designed to test skill in algebraic technique. The Geometry Test requires the making of actual geometrical constructions with compass and straight edge. No formal proofs are required.

¹ Published by the World Book Company, Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York.

The items are arranged in approximate order of difficulty. Space is provided for answers to appear in columns. Every answer is either right or wrong; no partial credits are given. With the exception of the Geometry Test, which must be scored by a geometrician, the scoring is entirely objective, requiring no judgment, and can therefore be done by clerks. All directions are given before the examinee begins. The time limit of each test is thirty minutes, and the work is uninterrupted.

A number of tables and charts are given in the Manual of Directions, in order that a student's score may be compared with the scores made by the 8,000 students who have taken this test and his relative standing among these students in engineering ability, as predicted by the tests, be determined.

A careful statistical study was made of the degree to which success in engineering courses would be predicted by means of each of the various tests and by records of high school achievement in physics, chemistry, geometry, algebra and English. Coefficients of correlation were obtained between scholarship in the engineering college and scores in the tests and between scholarship in the college and high school achievement. These correlations show that on the average the tests of this series have an appreciably higher predictive value than the records of school achievement. The relative value of the test scores and school achievement in predicting engineering scholarship is shown in a table in the Manual. A table is also given showing the probability of the success of a student coming within the highest quarter, second quarter, third quarter, or lowest quarter of scores in each test.

On the whole, the tests have demonstrated their distinct value as an adjunct to other available data, such as high school scholarship, and may be employed to determine with a high degree of accuracy the probable success of a student in college engineering courses and in engineering professions.

ARTHUR S. OTIS,
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